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United Nations

Committee of Experts on Public Administration

Report on the fourth session (4-8 April 2005)

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Summary

The present report contains the conclusions and recommendations of the fourth session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration, held at United Nations Headquarters from 4 to 8 April 2005. The Committee, which was established by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2001/45, consists of 24 experts appointed in their personal capacity for a four-year period. The Committee dealt with the following substantive items: (a) revitalizing public administration: strategic directions for the future; (b) searching for a bottom-up approach and methodologies for developing foundations and principles of sound public administration; (c) promoting and rewarding innovation and excellence for revitalizing public administration and service delivery: the United Nations Public Service Awards; and (d) review of the activities of the United Nations Programme on Public Administration, Finance and Development.

Based on the discussion of the above-mentioned topics, the Committee recommended to the attention of the Economic and Social Council a draft resolution for its consideration and adoption. The Committee also produced a set of conclusions for consideration by the Economic and Social Council, Member States and the United Nations Secretariat.

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Chapter I

Draft resolution for adoption by the Economic and Social Council

The Committee of Experts on Public Administration recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its fourth session and dates, venue and provisional agenda for the fifth session of the Committee

The Economic and Social Council,

Reaffirming the importance of governance which flows from a harmonious and balanced relationship of the State, the market and civil society, and reaffirming the importance of State capacity, including institutional and human resources capacity, in securing steady and sustainable progress to internationally agreed commitments and objectives,

Recognizing that all Member States, particularly those from the developing countries, can greatly benefit from peer learning and the sharing of experiences in the area of innovation and initiative in the public sector,

Recognizing that granting the United Nations Public Service Awards is an effective means for rewarding outstanding achievement of public administrations and encouraging their replication,

Recognizing recent regional initiatives which have led to successful actions to promote integrity, transparency and accountability,

Underscoring the importance of public administration as a tool to support progress in connection with a wider concept of security to include human security, human rights and development, in line with the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[1]

Reaffirming the need to deepen the participatory processes of government to ensure citizens' engagement to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and to encourage the Secretariat to provide the analytical tools, research capacity and advisory services to this end,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration at its third session;[2]

2. *Encourages* countries to ratify, adopt and implement the relevant commitments and conventions in the areas of integrity, transparency and accountability, including those related to the prevention of corrupt policies and practices;

3. *Requests* the Committee of Experts on Public Administration to deepen its analysis of the relationships between State capacity, public administration and development by identifying, for the benefit of interested countries, successful models, options and solutions in the area of public administration that have

[1] General Assembly resolution 55/2.

[2] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2004, Supplement No. 24* (E/2004/44).

facilitated the achievement of development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to disseminate and promulgate in a more systematic and coherent way the innovations and successful practices recognized by the United Nations Public Service Awards;

5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to strengthen the capacity and the reach of the United Nations Online Network in Public Administration and Finance (UNPAN) to serve as a vehicle for sharing knowledge, innovation and practices in public administration, particularly by linking more partner organizations from developing countries to the network;

6. *Approves* the convening of the fifth session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration in New York from 3 to 7 April 2006;

7. *Approves* the following agenda for the fifth session of the Committee:

1. Innovation in public administration for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

2. Searching for a bottom-up approach and methodologies for developing foundations and principles of sound public administration (continued from the fourth session).

3. Review of the work programme of the United Nations Programme on Public Administration, Finance and Development.

Chapter II
Organization of the session

A. Duration of the session

1. The Committee of Experts on Public Administration, which was established by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2001/45 and consists of 24 experts appointed in their personal capacity by the Council upon the nomination of the Secretary-General, held its fourth session at United Nations Headquarters from 4 to 8 April 2005.

B. Attendance

2. The session was attended by 18 members of the Committee. Observers from organizations of the United Nations system and from intergovernmental, non-governmental and other organizations also attended.

3. The session was attended by the following members: Marie-Françoise Bechtel (France), Conseiller d'État, Conseil d'État; Rachid Benmokhtar Benabdellah (Morocco), President, Al Akhawayn University; Jocelyne Bourgon (Canada), Ambassador, Canadian Permanent Mission to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development; Luiz Carlos Bresser-Pereira (Brazil), Getúlio Vargas Foundation; Giuseppe Franco Ferrari (Italy), Chair for Public Comparative Law, L. Bocconi University of Milan; Geraldine J. Fraser-Moleketi (South Africa), Minister for Public Service and Administration; Werner Jann (Germany), Chair for Political Science, Administration and Organization, Potsdam University; Barbara Kudrycka (Poland), Rector, Bialystok School of Public Administration; Gonzalo D. Martner Fanta (Chile), Deputy Secretary, Ministerio Secretaría General de la Presidencia; Kuldeep Mathur (India), Academic Director, Centre for the Study of Law and Governance, Jawaharlal Nehru University; José Oscar Monteiro (Mozambique), Coordinator of Project ISAP — Instituto Superior da Administração Pública, Mozambique, and Visiting Professor, University of the Witwatersrand (South Africa); Akira Nakamura (Japan), Dean of the Graduate School, Department of Political Science, Meiji University; Apolo Nsibambi (Uganda), Prime Minister; Jaime Rodriguez-Arana Munoz (Spain), Facultad de Derecho de la Universidad de La Coruña, and Cremades and Calvo-Sotelo, Abogados; Dennis A. Rondinelli (United States of America), Glaxo Distinguished International Professor of Management, Kenan-Flagler Business School, University of North Carolina; Patricia A. Santo Tomas (Philippines), Minister of Labour and Employment; Otton Solis-Fallas (Costa Rica), Member of the Board of the Open University of Costa Rica; and Volodymyr G. Yatsuba (Ukraine), former Head of the State Administration of the Dnipropetrovsk oblast (region) of the Ukraine. The following members could not attend: Jean-Marie Atangana Mebara (Cameroon), Minister of State, Secretary-General, Presidency of the Republic; Petrus Compton (Saint Lucia), Attorney-General and Minister of Justice; Beshara Merhej (Lebanon), Member of Parliament and Minister of State; Sakhir Thiam (Senegal), President, University of Dakar-Bourguiba; Borwornsak Uwanno (Thailand), Secretary-General, King Prajadhipok Institute; and Wang Xiaochu (China), Vice-Minister of Personnel.

C. Agenda

4. The agenda of the Committee for its fourth session was as follows:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Emerging issues in revitalizing public administration.
4. Searching for a bottom-up approach and methodologies for developing foundations and principles of sound public administration.
5. Promoting and rewarding innovation and excellence in revitalizing public administration and service delivery: the United Nations Public Service Awards.
6. Review of United Nations activities in the area of public administration.
7. Proposed programme of work and agenda for the fifth session of the Committee of Experts.

D. Election of officers

5. The Committee by consensus retained for its fourth session the same set of officers elected during its third session, as follows:

Chairperson:
Prime Minister Apolo Nsibambi (Uganda)

Vice-Chairpersons:
Marie-Françoise Bechtel (France)
Jocelyne Bourgon (Canada)
Luiz Carlos Bresser-Pereira (Brazil)
Wang Xiaochu (China)*

Rapporteur:
José Oscar Monteiro (Mozambique)

* Unable to attend.

Chapter III
Summary of proceedings and conclusions

A. Revitalizing public administration: strategic directions for the future

1. The report of the Secretary-General on revitalizing public administration (see E/C.16/2005/2) identifies three strategic areas on which the process of revitalizing public administration should focus:

- Improving economic and social decision-making institutions and processes
- Strengthening integrity, transparency and accountability
- Reconciling security requirements with demands for social service delivery

2. In the case of the Millennium Development Goals, it is clear that capacity deficits in institutions and institutional processes adversely affect all other areas of development. Therefore, in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, it is critical to work simultaneously on all fronts to ensure that a virtuous circle develops. For example, strengthening institutions has a positive effect on integrity, transparency and accountability, which in turn improves policy options, service delivery and human security. The institutions and institutional processes that are called upon to support market-based development are also the ones expected to provide equitable distribution of the benefits of growth to all citizens. Market orientation, a key to economic growth, sustains a value system that may contradict the traditional welfare-based principles of the State. In general, revitalization of the public sector is a broader challenge than the development challenge, and it hinges in part on concerns regarding the role of government and its ability to dispense public services, and civil society perceptions of its legitimacy. The bureaucratic aspects of public administration should be contrasted with the engagement of citizens and the promotion of good governance, which in turn are core elements of the challenge to achieve the required revitalization.

3. For many developing countries, existing public administration capacities seem inadequate to mainstream poverty reduction within a macroeconomic policy framework. The challenge is to ensure that public administration structures are more pro-poor and that they support the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. There is a need to look afresh at integrating policy requirements of pro-poor policies with concerns regarding integrity, transparency and accountability. Accordingly, the poverty reduction strategy papers offer a potential opportunity for creating space for an accountable and participatory process that is aligned to the Millennium Development Goals: a stable macroenvironment, a robust role for the private sector in line with developmental objectives and dialogue with civil society to directly influence public policy.

4. The best assurance for human security is the realization of the commitments contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, specifically the Millennium Development Goals. In this regard, the human security issues articulated through the Goals need reaffirmation. Otherwise, there is a risk that security will be interpreted and implemented within too narrow a focus, without appreciation of the wider context of developmental challenges and integrity, transparency and accountability, which critically affect security concerns. Of

particular importance is the need to ensure coherence between various domestic sectoral policies, as well as between domestic and international agendas.

5. In conclusion, the Committee agreed that these emerging three challenges are clearly interdependent and it recognized their key role in achieving the Goals.

6. The Committee also noted that the revitalization of public administration would be enriched by a developmental approach that encourages efficiency in service provision, strategic thinking, policy innovations and options, and political leadership. Another core issue was how to handle the traditional bureaucratic aspects of the public sector with emerging trends characterized by partnerships, citizen involvement and citizen perception of government. This last issue was considered relevant to both developing and developed countries.

7. The Committee believes that public administration has an invaluable and irreplaceable role to play in helping shape policies and coordinating multiple stakeholders, including the private sector, non-State actors and civil society at large. Public administration is intrinsic and instrumental in promoting public trust in government. In order to achieve this goal, permanent civic participation has to be incorporated as a tool for reinvigorating public administration and making use of a wider pool of resources among citizens.

8. The Committee further noted that development of the regulatory role of the State has to be carefully planned inasmuch as it requires far more capacity from the State than is currently available and will become much more prominent in the years to come. States must be prepared to give this issue the emphasis it deserves by preparing public administrations for these new tasks.

9. The Committee was concerned that the major issue of equity, which emerges at the local, national and global levels in more just societies, as stated in the Millennium Development Goals to a large extent, calls for a wider role to be played by public administration in addressing inequalities and the situation of the poor.

10. The Committee also noted that new challenges emerging from the rapid pace of development and the effect the decisions made by one generation have on the successive immediate generations, be it on the environment, social security benefits or resource availability, create new transgenerational challenges.

11. Finally, the Committee reaffirmed that decentralization, when combined with civic participation, makes local government a more effective tool for good local governance. However, the matter of decentralization ought to be handled sensitively, for it may not always lead to the deepening of democracy.

12. A major conclusion of the Committee was that the United Nations Secretariat should deepen its analytical, advisory and technical cooperation capacities to ensure that viable options of public administration practices are identified and preconditions for their successful adaptation clearly set out, in support of the Millennium Development Goals. The new challenge is working with acknowledged diverse models and traditions of organization and public affairs management, and looking for successful policy options. This implies shared knowledge, public administration education and training, transborder cooperation and support of international organizations.

13. The Committee recommended that the Economic and Social Council encourage countries to ratify, adopt and implement the relevant commitments and

conventions in the areas of integrity, transparency and accountability, including those relating to corruption, crime and forced or child labour. It is important to recognize regional initiatives, such as those in Africa, which have successfully initiated actions to implement integrity, transparency and accountability.

14. The Committee also agreed to recommend to the Economic and Social Council that it support a wider concept of security to include human security and human rights, in line with the Millennium Declaration. It acknowledged that good public administration is inseparable from the protection and fulfilment of human rights, concerning the guarantee of freedoms and equality and social redress, as well as securing a balanced relationship between the citizen and the State.

15. The Committee wished to draw the attention of the Economic and Social Council to an emerging paradigm in public administration, which incorporates both the State and the market and the State and civil society, at both the central and local levels and the national and global levels. It further noted that, after decades of debate on the exclusive role of those two partners — State and market — it is becoming clear that there is much more complementarity than opposition between their roles. Market forces alone, without adequate developmental public policies and appropriate State intervention, cannot contribute to uplifting economic productivity and social progress. Markets and civil societies will not thrive without strong and competent public administrations. The Economic and Social Council should reaffirm and deepen the participatory processes of Government and civil society dialogue and inclusion, in order to implement the Millennium Development Goals, and support the Secretariat in providing the analytical tools, research findings and advisory services to this end.

B. Searching for a bottom-up approach and methodologies for developing foundations and principles of sound public administration

16. The report of the Secretariat on bottom-up approaches (E/C.16/2005/3), distinguished "standardized principles of administration" from "criteria-based" approaches and found that the second approach represented a potentially adaptive solution. On the one hand, the standardized principles are limited by the classical problems of the "one size fits all" approach. Criteria-based approaches, on the other hand, share a common assumption that organizations that display key elements of selected critical criteria have the capacity for effective and efficient performance. A bottom-up approach and methodology ensures that citizens themselves have the last word on the underlying principles, foundations, quality and effectiveness of their own public administration. Due consideration can thus be given to the diversity of national management systems.

17. The idea of involving the citizenry in evaluating administrations is very important, and Governments would stand to gain by measuring performance. However, it is important to ascertain if it is really the citizen at the bottom who conducts the assessment. The level of use of information and communication technologies (ICT) as a measure of participation is not enough, from a democratic point of view. For instance, there are developing countries that lack access to ICTs, but that same lack is also an issue in developed countries.

18. The Committee noted that the core issue is a sharp decline of trust in government, a universal phenomenon found in both developed and developing countries. It is also unclear how to improve transparency, accountability and equity and be able to guarantee the integrity of such processes as decentralization and participation and a host of other requisites intrinsic to a good governance agenda. It is critical to find a sound method of assessing and alleviating the declining trust in Government. More attention should be paid to promoting participation in public affairs and citizenship.

19. In identifying common sound public administration principles, the Committee agreed to consider principles that are operational and structural. These operational and structural principles should be divided into three categories, referring to State structure, civil service and managerial practices. In relation to State structure, the question is not whether State should be unitary or federal, but rather which services should be performed directly by the State, through the use of statutory civil servants, and which services should the State outsource to third parties, while maintaining responsibility for them. In modern public administration practice, the State should directly provide, through its civil service, only the services that involve the use of State power or that control State resources. The other activities that the State finances are auxiliary activities, such as catering, construction or cleaning services, which are outsourced competitively to business enterprises, and social and scientific services, which are supposed to be outsourced by the strategic core of the State, formed of politicians and senior civil servants, to decentralized agencies or non-governmental organizations of civil society. Agencies can be made accountable in three ways: (a) management by contracted outcomes; (b) managed competition for excellence in the provision of services; and (c) social accountability mechanisms in which citizens' councils and civil society public advocacy organizations have a major role to play.

20. The emerging consensus of the Committee was that there are three components that are integral to any study of public administration: public administration, the market and social institutions, all interacting with one another. There are also some principles that are fundamental and can be defined, such as transparency, accountability, participation, equity, legitimacy, effectiveness and efficiency. Efficiency is a paramount concept within this framework, as it is an end goal in judging the quality of public sector performance.

21. The members of the Committee reaffirmed strongly that there is no good governance without good government and good public administration and that some principles common to public administration centre on the objectives of good governance, such as the proper running of public affairs as a shared good for all citizens, which should not be usurped by a certain group or category. The members also reaffirmed that these principles may relate to the structure of the State, the civil service and management practices, enriched by new societal practices drawn from different social and cultural backgrounds and concurring with the pursuit of public interest.

22. The Committee recognized that there are some principles of public administration that are fundamental and can be defined. The definition of these common principles should result from a shared and participative process, not from an imposed vision. These common principles are not static and do not apply uniformly in all places and cultures. Experience has demonstrated the diversity of

situations, experiences and cultures, and the futility of trying to adopt single models or single priorities. The Committee agreed that a participatory process is called for in order to identify the main principles constituting the backbone of the objectives of public administration. Accordingly, and as a basis for its discussions, the Committee decided to focus on the definition of the basic concepts relating to governance and public administration, providing an in-depth assessment of such concepts, their evolution and their use and application. The Committee felt that definition of these concepts and related terminology would greatly benefit the discussion in governmental processes, as well as in the work of practitioners.

23. The Committee also noted that public administration remains the most immediate instrument at the disposal of States for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and that, nevertheless, the issue does not feature prominently in the role many States accord to their respective public administrations. It is a fact that in many countries civil servants remain underappreciated and underpaid, and their commitment to public service does not receive proper recognition. The Committee recognized that only recently was the trend of downgrading public sector achievements reversed, after having caused considerable damage to the process of institutional consolidation of the public sector.

24. The Committee recognized the importance of ascertaining the desired values and qualities of public administrations in effective service delivery. It requested the Secretariat, in collaboration with the Committee, to prepare a questionnaire to elicit views from the recipients of public services on what constitutes a well-performing, efficient and quality-oriented public administration. This questionnaire should refer to public service indicators that apply to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

25. Common characteristics would certainly include equity, stability, legitimacy, integrity and trust, which can be achieved through equal rights, both political and economic. Regardless of the degree of State intervention individual countries choose to adopt, the public administration will perform its duties better if it achieves high standards in terms of efficiency and productivity. A bottom-up approach, looking at national and particular local experiences, is one of the more appropriate ways to identify and incorporate genuine communitarian and participatory values into the mainstream of universal values of public administration.

C. Promoting and rewarding innovation and excellence for revitalizing public administration and service delivery: the United Nations Public Service Awards

26. An introductory statement was made by the secretariat based on its report (see E/C.16/2005/5), which provides an overview of the background, purpose and process of the United Nations Public Service Awards launched in 2003 upon the recommendation of the fifteenth meeting of the Group of Experts on the United Nations Programme on Public Administration and Finance (see General Assembly resolution 49/136) to recognize and encourage excellence in public administration. The establishment of the awards was motivated by the consensus that governance and public administration play a critical role in poverty reduction and the development process. Yet, the accomplishments and importance of a competent,

knowledgeable and experienced public service in implementing national development strategies and attaining the Millennium Development Goals have been underrecognized. Public administration, both as a national entity and as a discipline, has not been effective in communicating its achievements or integrity of purpose and practice. In the light of this unfortunate gap between the image and the reality of public administration, the United Nations Public Service Awards have been established to recognize and reward innovation, motivate future initiative and selfless public service, and promote dissemination and replication of public administration knowledge and good practices.

27. In the first two years awards were given for: (a) improvement of public service results; (b) improvement of the quality of the public service process; (c) innovations in public service; and (d) application of information and communication technology in local government. As the award process has evolved, categories have been refined to include: (a) improvement of transparency, accountability and responsiveness in public service; (b) improvement of the delivery of services; and (c) application of information and communication technology in government. The awards process starts with an announcement of the competition and a call for nominations, and ends with an awards ceremony, held at Headquarters on 23 June, which is United Nations Public Service Day. All winners are invited to the United Nations Public Service Day and awards ceremony which includes the granting of awards, presentations of the winning initiatives and videoconference arrangements with high-level representatives from a number of participating countries.

28. In its first three years, the United Nations Public Service Awards have broken new ground and progressed in promoting the prestige and professionalism of public service. Discussants and members of the Committee participated in this timely review, which revealed the following areas that could be strengthened both in terms of improving the process of granting awards and the content of the awards themselves:

(a) Decentralizing or localizing the process of nomination, evaluation and verification of submissions at the regional or national levels would be beneficial in several ways. That would engender greater social participation in the award process, which would create greater publicity, enhanced public awareness and possibly more use of and participation in the actual practice being nominated. It would also deepen the verisimilitude of the selection and evaluation process, as easier verification of results and impacts would be possible by a multisectoral group familiar with the constraints and realities of the local environment;

(b) Focusing on and encouraging partnerships, teamwork and participation would enhance the value of the public service awards. Given the evolution in public administration towards forming partnerships to achieve the results and vision of public service, the awards need to recognize and reward the good practices inherent in innovative partnership arrangements. Open-ended, flexible definitions of partnership are needed, as they include not only conventional public/private partnerships and those with civil society, but also government/government and national public administration/national public administration partnerships, as well as government/regional organization, South/South and South/North partnerships. Similarly, the United Nations can improve its award process by developing its own partnerships that connect to and develop synergies with specialized counterpart organizations that conduct similar public administration awards processes;

(c) Revisiting, and perhaps expanding, the award categories may enhance the relevance and import of the awards. In the light of significant and pressing challenges facing many developing countries, including those emerging from conflict, the least developed countries and countries with fragile governance situations, it could be important to have a special provision that recognizes the degree of difficulty inherent in achieving a desired public policy objective, and to work towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, provide specific services to society or achieve other peace and development objectives. The awards process could accomplish that by becoming more cognizant of situations of selflessness in the public service, significant risks taken by public servants, the strength and resilience required in certain circumstances, which are above and beyond the call of duty, as well as the innovativeness or excellence of a particular public administration practice;

(d) The United Nations Public Service Awards have created an immense and unique resource for good practices in public administration, which can be better utilized and disseminated to make a greater contribution to the discipline. The United Nations could use the information contained in the many outstanding submissions in a number of ways. Case studies could be compiled to share the practices widely with public administration professionals and national counterparts. These could be written by the implementing organization, Secretariat staff and an external evaluator to fully uncover how the practice/innovation arose to meet a need, the challenges, solutions, impacts and the potential for replicability. The information in the nomination forms would be a useful resource to academics and others seeking to highlight and further disseminate good practices. The United Nations could further enhance dissemination by inviting relevant award winners to participate in expert group meetings, training workshops and regional or subregional information-sharing activities. Finally, it should seek additional ways to enhance the publicity and visibility of the winning practices, as well as the awards themselves. This can be done through devoting greater attention to public relations, substantive publications, using electronic media, working with regional and national counterparts and capitalizing on and sharing with other organizations that have relevant expertise.

29. In summary, even in its first few years of existence, the United Nations Public Service Awards have been invaluable in enhancing the self-esteem of public servants, educating and enlightening critics, bringing deserved attention to outstanding public administration practices and restoring trust in government. There is great potential for the public service awards to do much more to enhance the professionalism and prestige of public administration worldwide. Dedicated attention and greater financial resources are required to fulfil the potential inherent in this unique global awards process.

30. The United Nations Public Service Awards are an innovative and effective means for recognizing outstanding achievements of public administrations and encouraging their replication. Therefore, the process of soliciting nominations, evaluating submissions, selecting and rewarding winners and disseminating information should be streamlined and strengthened, including more localized evaluation and verification of awards with international, national and civil society participation.

31. The innovations and successful practices recognized by the awards should be disseminated and promulgated in more systematic and coherent ways. They should be integrated into the normative and technical cooperation activities of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and should be highlighted and promoted in United Nations documentation, on Internet sites, through national media and via professional networks and counterpart award processes. Funding should be sought to obtain resources to strengthen the visibility, outreach and replication of the innovative practices.

32. In recognition of the various obstacles and challenges to public administration in developed and developing countries, it should be considered whether to adapt or expand the criteria and/or categories to recognize the special difficulties faced by public administration in the least developed countries, crisis or post-conflict countries or countries with special development challenges. This would take into account public administrations that work in the midst of natural disasters and complex emergencies to maintain impartial and committed public service, take personal and professional risks and demonstrate fortitude and resilience in order to persevere for peace and justice in extraordinary circumstances.

D. Review of the activities of the United Nations Programme on Public Administration, Finance and Development

33. The Committee commended the presentation made by the secretariat of the United Nations Programme on Public Administration, Finance and Development reflecting the specific activities conducted by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. It applauded the work and progress achieved in the previous year.

34. The Committee expressed its appreciation to the Economic and Social Council for its review of the report of the Committee on its third session as contained in Council resolution 2005/3 and to the General Assembly, which reviewed at its fifty-ninth session the report of the Secretary-General on public administration and development (A/59/346) and adopted resolution 59/55.

35. The Committee supported the programme of work presented by the secretariat of the United Nations Programme on Public Administration, Finance and Development, which proposed to promote efficient, accountable, participatory and transparent public administration for the attainment of internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration and in the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences.

36. The Committee noted with appreciation the presentation of the secretariat of the Programme, which described the implementation of the Programme mission by functional and administrative groups on governance and public administration; socio-economic governance and management; knowledge management and e-government; and public administration networking.

37. The Committee supported the integrated approach presented by the secretariat of the Programme, which interlinks analytical and substantive work with technical cooperation and information-sharing and networking. However, it also felt that more interdisciplinary modalities should be pursued, since most public administration issues are interrelated.

38. The Committee approved the long-term thematic directions and the proposed activities for 2006-2007, as described in the proposed budget document presented by its secretariat.

39. The Committee welcomed the forthcoming celebration of the tenth anniversary of the resumed fiftieth session of the General Assembly on public administration and development, and approved the suggestions initiated by the secretariat to: (a) organize a special celebration of Public Service Day; (b) hold a special United Nations Public Service Awards ceremony; (c) support a publication on the 60-year history of public administration in the United Nations; and (d) take an active role in the organization of the Seventh Global Forum on Reinventing Government, to be held at the United Nations in 2006. The Committee provided concrete suggestions on the overall substantive theme for the Forum.

40. The Committee noted with appreciation the accomplishments of the United Nations Online Network in Public Administration and Finance. Recognizing the vital role that the Network plays as a central component of a global network of public administration organizations, the Committee strongly recommended the continuation and strengthening of the Network initiative.

41. The Committee welcomed the presentation on the findings of the *World Public Sector Report* on the theme "Unlocking the human potential for public sector performance". It also suggested possible topics for the next report.

42. The Committee decided that it would continue to provide overall guidance and oversight to the Network, but would not involve itself in management decisions, which should be left to the partners of the Network.

43. The Committee highlighted that governance should be looked at in a holistic manner, from a bottom-up perspective, and encouraged organs of the United Nations to increase cooperation among themselves to provide an integrated approach to public administration challenges, especially in countries emerging from conflicts, as a means of developing people's trust in public administration. The Committee also advocated the preparation of a concepts paper to address critical problems confronting countries.

44. The Committee welcomed the initiative of the secretariat of the United Nations Programme on Public Administration, Finance and Development to develop a publication on the 60-year history of public administration in the United Nations, and agreed that it would be a useful tool for experts and students. The Committee recommended that historical data be contextualized in line with contemporary criteria.

45. The members of the Committee agreed that they would contribute individually to a publication on the topics discussed during the initial four sessions of the Committee, with a preface written by the chairperson, and noted that the document would remain as a historical working record of the Committee.

E. Presentations

46. In addition to the above agenda items, presentations were also made on the following themes:

(a) Economic and social councils as a mechanism for participatory decision-making in the economic and social areas, presented by the Executive Secretary of the International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions;

(b) 2005 Africa governance survey, presented by the Officer in Charge, Development Policy and Management Division of the Economic Commission for Africa;

(c) Governance index, presented by the Director of Global Governance and Latin America Capacity-Building and Learning of the World Bank Institute;

(d) E-government readiness index, presented by the Economic Affairs Officer, Knowledge Management Branch, Division for Public Administration and Development Management of the United Nations Secretariat;

(e) International Conference on Engaging Communities, presented by the Deputy Director-General, Department of Communities of Queensland State Government, Australia;

(f) World Public Sector Report, presented by the Chief of the Governance and Public Administration Branch of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management;

(g) Sixth Global Forum on Reinventing Government, presented by the Principal Adviser of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management;

(h) Preparatory activities for the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the resumed fiftieth session of the General Assembly on public administration and development, presented by the Director of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management;

(i) Standards of excellence in public administration training, presented by the representative of the International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration.

Annex

List of documents

Document symbol	*Agenda item*	*Title or description*
E/C.16/2005/1	2	Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters
E/C.16/2005/2	3	Revitalizing public administration: strategic directions for the future: report of the Secretary-General
E/C.16/2005/3	4	Searching for a bottom-up approach and methodologies for developing foundations and principles of sound public administration
E/C.16/2005/5	5	Promoting and rewarding innovation and excellence for revitalizing public administration and service delivery: the United Nations Public Service Awards: report of the Secretary-General

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